



**T**OGETHER  
BAY AREA

# HOPE ACTION TOGETHER

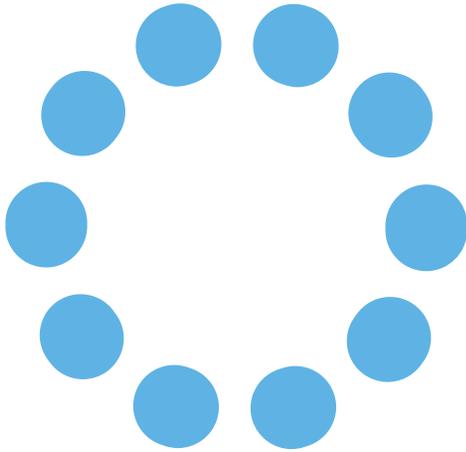
Strategic Direction 2024-2028

Climbing the Ohlone Regional Wilderness Trail. Credit: Ryan Branciforte



Rose Hammock, one of our partners at Redbud Resource Group, dances with the Round Valley Feather Dancers at the 2023 Spring Conference. Credit: Jennifer Hale

Every inch of land is Indigenous land.



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November 2023

TOGETHER Bay Area is a large, diverse, and growing coalition of organizations. Our member organizations are nonprofits, agencies, tribes, and businesses. They are located in all nine counties of the Bay Area plus Santa Cruz County. They each have their own mission and mandate. Each is different from the next.

What unites us is our shared vision for a just and equitable society where we live in right relations with the lands that sustain us now and will sustain future generations. Each member is working for healthy lands, people, and communities. Each is committed to regional collaboration.

This Strategic Direction sets our priorities for the next five years. Our priorities are our north stars, and they require many people's contributions, not just ours, in order to be realized. Under each priority, we identified objectives on which this organization will focus. And on an annual basis, we will set goals and develop plans to advance our work.

Please join us. Attend one of our events. Become a member. Partner with us. Together we'll achieve a lot more than we ever do alone, and more than we could have ever imagined.

Andrea Mackenzie, board president

Annie Burke, executive director

TOGETHER Bay Area, [togetherbayarea.org](https://togetherbayarea.org)

# Mission

Be a champion of and a regional voice for the resilient lands and watersheds that are integral to a thriving Bay Area and all people who live here.

Looking east from the Presidio to downtown San Francisco. Credit: Annie Burke

# Vision

A Bay Area that is home to healthy lands, people, and communities where we address the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises through collaboration. We live in a just and equitable society where we live in right relations with the lands that sustain us now and will sustain future generations.



Spring Conference attendees observed an osprey nest at lunch. Credit: Jennifer Hale

# Principles

Our principles are what TOGETHER Bay Area stands for as a coalition. They are embedded throughout the organization and guide us in setting and working towards our priorities and five-year objectives.

## 1.

The challenges we are experiencing in the 21st century are multidimensional and we need to create and implement multi-benefit solutions to address them.

## 2.

Relationships have the power to transform how we live together on these lands through culture and systems change and to build a path to resilience in an uncertain future.

## 3.

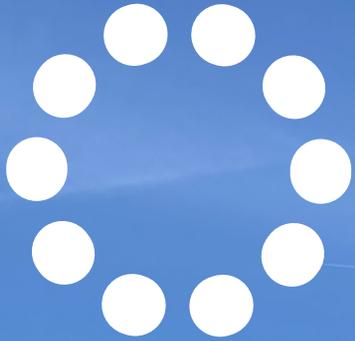
Justice, equity, and belonging are essential for resilience because the roots of social inequities, the climate crisis, and biodiversity decline are intertwined.

## 4.

People are a part of nature, not apart from nature. Indigenous people have stewarded the lands and waters for thousands of years. And today all people — especially those that have been systemically excluded — are encouraged and invited to participate in the stewardship of the land.

## 5.

All lands — urban, rural, natural, and working — need to be stewarded for biodiversity to thrive, to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis, and for the health of people and communities.



# Members

TOGETHER Bay Area members are nonprofits, public agencies, local Native American tribes and groups, and mission-aligned businesses. They work in the 9 counties of the SF Bay Area plus Santa Cruz County. They are on-the-ground implementers with programs and projects that make a tangible impact on the land and in their communities. <https://togetherbayarea.org/members/>



Members take a field trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park with the Right Relations pilot program. Credit: Annie Burke

# Values

Our values guide how TOGETHER Bay Area's team — including the board of directors, committees, staff, and contractors — sets annual goals, designs and plans projects, fosters a thriving organization, and engages with members and partners.

- 1. Trust.** We constantly work to build and maintain trust in all of our relationships by leading with heart and doing what we say we're going to do.
- 2. Joy.** We create opportunities for joy, play, creativity, and fun in order to create space for connection between people and ideas.
- 3. Belonging.** We aim to create a sense of belonging for everyone on our team and everyone who participates in our programs.
- 4. Equity.** We center equity in everything we do by asking who benefits from our work, who is not involved and should be, and how we can change culture and systems to be more just and equitable.
- 5. Learning.** We build a culture of learning in which we honor whole and complex human beings in our pursuit of the organization's mission and priorities. We solicit feedback regularly, support experimentation, acknowledge mistakes, and work to adapt and grow as a team.
- 6. Hope.** We seek out and elevate hope and positivity as the driving forces for the work we do.

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# Priorities & Objectives

The following five priorities serve as our north stars, and they will require many contributors, both inside and outside of TOGETHER Bay Area, to be achieved. Under each priority, there are five-year objectives that TOGETHER Bay Area will work to achieve by 2028.

1.

Together we will conserve and steward 50% of Bay Area lands by 2050.

2.

Together we will build regional capacity for Native American tribal alliances.

3.

Together we will secure significant and stable public funding that is equitably accessible and distributed.

4.

Together we will build and nurture a social network of practitioners and professionals.

5.

Together we will create and maintain a thriving organization.



Members take a field trip to the top of Mt Umunhum.  
Credit: Annie Burke



A mature madrone in the Mt Tamalpais watershed. Credit: Laura Rosenthal

## PRIORITY 1:

# Together we will conserve and steward 50% of Bay Area lands by 2050.

As a coalition of organizations, we collaborate to create a strategic network of healthy and connected lands — urban, rural, natural, and working — and watersheds. This priority is one way we address the climate and biodiversity crises and support California’s goal of conserving 30% of the state’s lands and coastal waters by 2030. It requires a collaborative approach along with other regional needs, e.g., housing and transportation, and with many partners. And it requires active and adaptive stewardship of all lands, living in right relation with the land and creating opportunities for equitable access to nature.

### *Five-Year Objectives:*

- Update the regional habitat goals to reflect the latest data and science, to address threats to biodiversity including catastrophic wildfire, and to incorporate urban biodiversity.
- Convene and equip members and partners—including people and organizations who have historically been excluded from regional planning—to take action with data, tools, and reports.
- Track and report progress toward regional goals in order to highlight achievements, identify gaps, and encourage the investment of the resources needed to reach the goals.

<https://togetherbayarea.org/habitat-goals/>

## PRIORITY 2:

# Together we will build regional capacity for Native American tribal alliances.

As a coalition, we increase the exchange of resources (e.g. land, power, knowledge, skills, etc.) between non-Native organizations and Native Tribes and groups in order to support tribal sovereignty, right historical wrongs, and create a just and healthy region. This priority is one way we address the climate and biodiversity crises, colonization, structural racism, and injustices and inequities being perpetuated today.

### *Five-Year Objectives*

- Build strong alliances with local Native American Tribes and groups.
- Convene multiple cohorts of the Right Relations program so that all member organizations have the opportunity to participate, learn, and take action
- Welcome and integrate Native American people, culture, and knowledge across TOGETHER Bay Area's programs and operations in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways.

<https://togetherbayarea.org/right-relations/>



Members take a field trip to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park with the Right Relations pilot program. Credit: Annie Burke



Members travel to Sacramento to meet with legislators about our policy priorities. Credit: Lauren Korth

### PRIORITY 3:

Together we will secure significant and stable public funding that is equitably accessible and distributed.

As a coalition, we collaborate to secure state funds for the State Coastal Conservancy and other agencies through traditional and innovative means. The funding transforms the region's lands and communities by enabling our members' projects and programs that support TOGETHER's mission, principles, and priorities. This priority advances nature-based and equity-centered solutions to the multiple crises we face as a region.

#### *Five-Year Objectives*

- Champion the State Coastal Conservancy and other agencies for funding in the state budget and state-wide bond measures.
- Engage the Policy Committee and our nonprofit, tribal, and local agency members in setting and achieving the annual policy priorities through coordinated actions.
- Build our members' capacity for advocacy by hosting venues for learning about and collaborating on public funding programs, legislative process, and accessing public funding.
- Explore, identify, and develop pathways for innovative options for new regional funding sources.

<https://togetherbayarea.org/advocacy/>

#### PRIORITY 4:

## Together we will build and nurture a social network of practitioners and professionals.

As a coalition, we invest in relationships in order to foster a sense of belonging, increase resilience, transform how we work together, and change the systems needed for equity and justice. Healthy relationships between people, between organizations, and between people and place are essential for the kinds of changes we want to catalyze. We expand and strengthen our community through inspiring experiences, information sharing, peer to peer learning, and venues for mutual aid.

#### *Five-Year Objectives*

- Convene a range of gatherings— online, in-person, small, and large— that facilitate relationship building, learning, and community building.
- Create welcoming spaces for professionals and practitioners in all departments and at all levels in our member organizations.

<https://togetherbayarea.org/coordination/>



Spring Conference attendees compare notes during a break.  
Credit: Jennifer Hale



TOGETHER Bay Area board and team members tour Tunnel Tops in San Francisco. Credit: Annie Burke

## PRIORITY 5:

# Together we will create and maintain a thriving organization.

TOGETHER Bay Area will consistently strive to be a durable, impactful, sustainable, and values-driven organization to achieve our mission and support the work of our members.

### *Five-Year Objectives*

- Establish a financial reserve to support organizational health and long term sustainability.
- Cultivate a culture that prioritizes working positively and productively together within the board, staff, and contractors.
- Define and achieve clear objectives, goals, and plans in order to achieve the five-year objectives. Adapt our plans as needed.
- Define, and regularly assess and adapt as needed, roles and responsibilities for board, staff, and contractors.
- Establish relationships with other coalitions around the state, country, and globe to exchange lessons learned about how to build, convene, and activate more coalitions like ours.

<https://togetherbayarea.org/regional-coalition/>

## GLOSSARY

Terms used in this document can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For clarity, this is how we define key terms in the context of this Strategic Direction.

### Resilience

We focus on resilience—an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change—because it is essential in the 21st century as we face the climate and biodiversity crises. When we refer to climate resilience, we include a) preventing the loss and/or degradation of land, b) supporting ecological functioning, c) connecting people to the land, and d) fostering a network of professionals and practitioners who collaborate on challenges and opportunities.

### Lands and watersheds

When we refer to lands, we include public parks, public lands, working lands like farms and ranches and forests, rural and urban lands, trails, urban greenspaces, watersheds, open spaces, preserves, and other similar natural spaces.

### Conservation and stewardship

When we refer to conservation and stewardship, we include acquisition, stewardship, maintenance, restoration, preservation, conservation, cultural resources and activities, outdoor recreation, public access to nature, active living as part of public health, and programs that connect people to nature.

### Right relations

Being in right relations means to embody respect and reciprocity in order to foster healthy relationships with our plant, animal, and human relatives. It means to move through the world with an awareness of your impact on the communities and ecosystems with which you share the earth.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Our members for their input, commitment to regional coordination, and trust in this organization to be a champion for their work.
- Our Board of Directors—Ana Ruiz, Andrea Mackenzie, Blanca Hernández, Lauren Korth, Lisa Baldinger, Max Kortzen, Melanie Parker, Nicholas Calderon, Rebecca Johnson, Shaun Horne, Valerie Lee, Yakuta Poonawalla—for their strategic leadership and dedication to this organization’s impact, values, and sustainability.
- Marla Cornelius for her guidance, wisdom, and facilitation of the process to create this strategic direction.
- Liz Callahan for her coaching, description of productive and positive teams, and focus on the heart of the matter.
- Laura Rosenthal, Jessica Little, Tom Robinson, and Annie Burke for thinking strategically, implementing thoughtfully, and having a lot of fun along the way.
- Alexandra Hammond for her creative design.
- Resources Legacy Fund for their financial support.

# About This Strategic Direction

TOGETHER Bay Area is the second iteration of the Bay Area Open Space Council. We are standing on the shoulders of many people who contributed to and participated in regional coordination over 33 years.

The organization was transformed in 2019. After months of input from hundreds of people, the board of directors approved a comprehensive plan for a reimagined organization. The 2019 plan guided us as we transformed from the Bay Area Open Space Council to TOGETHER Bay Area. And since then, as we have navigated a pandemic and catastrophic wildfires and so much more, we have successfully grown into a healthy and impactful organization.

In early 2023, we asked what's next. The world has changed dramatically since 2019. We have learned a lot about how a large and diverse coalition of organizations can collaborate and organize to work on shared goals. We have demonstrated success in our advocacy efforts for regional funding and 30x30 as well as in

programs addressing social injustices. And we have built trust and credibility in the Bay Area as well as in Sacramento. We wanted to know: How do we maximize the power of this coalition? What do we want to focus on? What do we want to accomplish together?

With input from our members, we have identified priorities that serve as our north stars as a coalition. It will take many people, initiatives, and resources to achieve these priorities. We have developed objectives that identify what role TOGETHER Bay Area will play to achieve those priorities given the mission, assets, and resources that this organization has. And every year we will set annual goals that move us closer and closer to our north stars.

Join us. Learn how you can get involved at [togetherbayarea.org](https://togetherbayarea.org).

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